



Deer Hunting by Residents Rule

Amendments to rule:

- **New antlerless-deer-only season in November (Friday-Saturday-Sunday after Thanksgiving)**
- **Extends January antlerless-deer-only season (from January 11 through the second following Sunday); extends season additional 7 days only in southern 2 tiers of counties and allows centerfire rifles of .24 caliber or larger, limit of six rounds, to be used during the 7-day extension in the southern 2 tiers of counties**
- **Increases license quotas for antlerless deer licenses (increased by 19,000)**
- **Closes roadways from deer hunting North of US30**
- **Clarifies penalties for providing false information when obtaining deer license**
- **Makes adjustments to landowner/tenant free tag program (SF 206)**

Timeline:

- The Department was given a clear mandate to accomplish the goal of reducing Iowa's herd by 25% by the end of the 2006 season. SF 206 includes specific language and guidance to the Department for special seasons in targeted areas.
- In the Notice of Intended Action for the Deer Rule (March 30) the Department cautioned the public that important harvest information was still needed. The Notice included language to the effect that the Department may recommend additional changes if data received showed the need to harvest additional deer. (At this point in time the deer bill details were still being negotiated).
- Public Meetings (held throughout the State via ICN) on the deer seasons for '06 and Jan. '07 reinforced the need to harvest additional does. The attendees were told that information was still being analyzed. At the time of these meetings, aerial deer surveys showed a favorable 15% decline (statewide average) in the deer population. By May 1st, the hunter harvest surveys were compiled and while they showed most counties as being near or at county population goals, they also showed reason for some concern in the southern Iowa counties. The spotlight surveys at the **end of May/first of June** indicated status quo or a slight increase in some southern counties.
- The need for an incentive to pull hunters to sparsely-populated counties with high quotas was identified in order to accomplish herd reduction in targeted areas. Special seasons to do this were quickly developed and put forward to the commission on June 9 as additions to the rule. Staff felt it is important to make sure all hunting regulations are published and distributed in a timely manner and in accordance with public expectations.

FAQs About the Resident Deer Hunting Rule, IAC Chapter 106

Hunters' concerns:

Some shotgun hunters are concerned that bucks will be shot illegally in the November antlerless-only season and bucks that have shed their antlers will be taken by mistake in the January antlerless-only season.

Some bowhunters are upset that the November antlerless-only season will intrude on "their" traditional season.

DNR response:

DNR data indicates that only 5% of the deer taken in the late season are shed-antler bucks. This represents less than 1% of the total annual buck harvest. Other data shows that only 15% of the bowhunting pressure takes place after Thanksgiving and that half the numbers of bowhunters are hunting as before Thanksgiving.

It is absolutely essential that hunters shoot more does to reduce deer numbers. Simply issuing more antlerless-only licenses has not worked everywhere. Some hunters could be temporarily inconvenienced, however, this is to reduce the herd. Both the November "Thanksgiving" season and the extended January season are considered temporary.

Safety concerns:

Some individuals are concerned that centerfire rifles pose an unacceptable safety risk to fellow hunters and other citizens.

DNR response:

Examination of hunter safety statistics for surrounding states that allow both shotgun and rifle hunting indicate about equal numbers of incidents occur with rifles and shotguns. Very few hunters are shot at a distance with either weapon; most accidents are self-inflicted or to a hunting partner standing nearby, whether by rifle or shotgun. Wounding non-hunting citizens is nearly non-existent. It is important to note that pistols and muzzleloaders have been legal methods of take during this season.

Centerfire rifles will be allowed only during a 7-day extension of the January antlerless-only season and only in the southern 2 tiers of counties *after all usual deer seasons are over*. Missouri has allowed deer hunting with rifles for decades with no unusual problems. Iowa permits rifles for hunting coyotes and small game and no unusual problems have arisen.

Questions about no hunting from roadways north of Highway 30:

Iowa code prohibits shooting a shotgun using slugs across a roadway statewide. It does not prohibit shooting a shotgun with slugs from a roadway ditch into the adjacent field. More than a decade ago, the DNR received complaints from motorists in northern Iowa about hunters hiding in road ditches and shooting at deer while they were driving by, and so the prohibition of hunting from roadways north of Highway 30 and west of Highway 63 was put into place. The problem was prevalent in northern Iowa because of the lack of cover to hunt deer. The DNR now proposes extending the ban all across Iowa north of Highway 30 because of recent complaints east of Highway 63. It is not a problem in the rest of the state.